

Commissioner Notes

By James M. Thomas

This past month has really put the State of Connecticut to the test. The weather has been extremely cold and there has been a significant amount of snowfall. Fortunately through the collective efforts of everyone, especially the local and state snow plowing crews, the roads have been made safe in a relatively quick time. The entire public safety team, including the Police, Fire, EMS, Emergency Management, Public Health, Transportation and a host of other disciplines have again stepped up and demonstrated the outstanding commitment they have to their respective professions.

As highlighted in this issue, one of the “highest risk” of fire is the inappropriate use of alternative sources of heating devices such as space heaters, candles, gas stoves, wood stoves etc. I know that we have been monitoring the weather, temperatures and power outages daily and we are very, very lucky not to have had the power failures during this cold weather pattern that have occurred in the states nearby. Even in the coldest weather, the utility companies have reported very few power interruptions. Please stress the safe use of the alternative heating sources in your local communities as a very high priority. Follow the advice of the local Fire Marshal and the local building officials who have the expertise in this area.

We have also provided a wind chill chart on page 6 of the issue, this simple to use chart really puts things into perspective. Winter is far from being over.

We are highlighting the recent 3rd Annual Intelligence Liaison Conference. Despite the poor weather on January 15th over 135 law enforcement officers came and received the latest training in this very important area of homeland security.

Enjoy the February issue, and try to stay warm and let's hope for some break in the weather pattern in the near future.

Vol. 5 Issue 2

Inside This Issue

February 2009

*Alternative heating
Sources*

TWIC Program

*Citizen Corps Bulletin
Link*

WHAT'S NEW:

UPCOMING TRAINING and EXERCISES

HSIN Workshop

Agro-terrorism

Crisis Leadership

Bioterrorism: Mass
Prophylaxis Preparedness
& Planning

Lincoln's Birthday—Feb. 12th
President's Day—Feb. 16th
All State Office's Closed

ALTERNATIVE HEATING SOURCES

With energy prices on the rise, consumers are turning to alternative heating sources to keep their homes warm this winter. Sales figures show a significant increase in demand for wood pellet stoves in the last two months, and it is likely there will also be renewed interest in space heaters, fireplaces and other devices. With that in mind, the Institute for Business & Home Safety offers the following safety information.

USE CAUTION

Before using any heating device, install carbon monoxide detectors in several parts of the house. Never use a kerosene heater indoors.

STOVE PLACEMENT

Alternate Heating Stoves can vary in construction regarding self-contained insulation and thermal protection. Thus a single layer iron-walled stove can generate enormous heat several feet in all directions. More sophisticated multiple walled insulated forced air stoves can remain safe to the touch when in use. Except where specifically recommended by the manufacturer, only the fuel (e.g., pellets, corn, log wood, coal or gas) for which a stove is designed should be used.

Placement of the stove must take into consideration adequate space for installation, maintenance and replacement, flue or vent pipe routing and most importantly, safe location relative to combustible materials. NFPA recognizes appropriate ANSI and UL standards and testing of the reduction of heat with distance from the unit as well as non-combustible shielding (defined in codes). Properly tested and rated stoves will have an attached safety label and an installation manual which will detail the manufacturer's recommended minimum separations. Some general guidelines are provided for different types of stoves in the following sections for cases when labels are missing.

In most cases, protection of the floor or combustible surface under a stove is required and specified including shielding beneath and extending on all sides in accordance with the code and label requirements. This includes adequate protection in front of the fire box and where ash removal is required.

Standards also exist for locating and routing flue and vent pipes in order to provide separation from combustibles adjacent to and through walls and to existing chimneys.

PELLET STOVES

These modern devices operate through an automated fuel-delivery process. In some designs, a fan delivers air to the fire and blows exhaust by-products out of a vent pipe that is smaller and typically less expensive than a chimney. Often, a separate fan blows air through heat exchangers in the stove and out into the home.

- Always hire an installer who is licensed and certified.
- Stove placement must allow for access to proper venting and electrical sources and must meet minimum required clearances. Certified installers operate according to these guidelines.
- Outlets must be checked for proper voltage, grounding and polarity.
- According to model building codes, multiple walled insulated forced air stoves within compartments or alcoves should have a minimum of 3 inches of working space clearance along the sides, back and top with a total width of the enclosing space being at least 12 inches wider than the stove.
 - Stoves having a firebox open to the atmosphere should have at least a 6-inch working space along the front combustion chamber side.
- ◆ Keep the stove clear of all combustible materials.
- ◆ Use PL vent pipes tested to Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 641.



The following materials should never be used to vent pellet appliances:

- ◆ Dryer vent
- ◆ Gas appliance Type B vent
- ◆ PVC pipe
- ◆ Single-wall stove pipe, unless approved by local codes and the installation manual
- ◆ Inspect chimney before installation. Relining may be required.
- ◆ Altitudes higher than 2,500 feet may require special venting options.
- ◆ An outside air source may be required for houses with tight construction or strong kitchen, bath or other exhaust fans.
- ◆ Manufacturer's instructions must be closely followed regarding sealing joints and seams, particularly of pressurized mechanical exhaust vents.
- ◆ Regular maintenance is critical to ensure safe operation.
- ◆ Frequency of cleaning will depend on the fuel type, grade and content.
- ◆ Components should be inspected daily.
- ◆ Professional cleaning is recommended for vent systems before each seasonal use.

WOOD STOVES

These traditional heat sources remain popular, but have been linked to an increase in house and chimney fires.

- ◆ Choose a stove that has been tested by Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- ◆ Second-hand stoves should be free of broken parts or cracks.
- ◆ Maintain at least a 36-inch clearance between the stove and combustible materials or use fire-resistant materials to protect woodwork and other areas. Follow manufacturer's guidelines.
- ◆ Keep the stove clear of combustible materials.
- ◆ Noncombustible floor covering should be used under and around the stove. The material should extend 18 inches on all sides.
- ◆ Prior to using the stove, place a layer of sand or firebrick in the bottom of the firebox.
- ◆ Vent pipes or chimneys must be inspected prior to use.
- ◆ If a stove pipe is used:
 - ◆ Use 22- or 24-gauge metal with a total length of less than 10 feet.
 - ◆ Maintain at least 18 inches between the top of the stove pipe and the ceiling or other combustible material.
- ◆ Ensure that the stove pipe enters the chimney at a spot higher than the outlet of the stove firebox and that it does not extend into the chimney flue lining.
- ◆ The inside thimble diameter should be the same size as the stove pipe for a proper seal.
- ◆ The stove pipe should not pass through a floor, closet, concealed space or enter the chimney in the attic.
- ◆ If a metal chimney is used, make sure it is UL-approved.

Whether masonry or metal, the chimney should extend:

- ◆ At least 3 feet above the highest point where it passes through the roof and
- ◆ At least 2 feet above any portion of the building within 10 horizontal feet of the chimney.

The chimney flue lining should not be blocked.

- ◆ Keep the chimney flue and stove pipe clean and free of obstructions.

SPACE HEATERS

These appliances can be an affordable option for heating a small space, but they also are the leading source of house fires during winter months.

- ◆ Look for products that have been tested by UL.
- ◆ Buy a model with an automatic shut-off feature and heat element guards.
- ◆ Maintain a 36-inch clearance between the heater and combustible materials, such as bedding, furniture, wall coverings or other flammable items.
- ◆ Do not leave a heater unattended.

Electric heaters should be inspected prior to use.

- ◆ Check the cord for fraying, cracking and look for broken wires or signs of overheating in the device itself.
- ◆ Use only heavy-duty extension cords marked with a No. 14-gauge or larger wire.
- ◆ If the heater's plug has a grounding prong, use only a grounding (three-wire) extension cord.
- ◆ Never run the heater's cord (or any cord) under rugs or carpeting.

Liquid-fueled heaters must be operated using only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer.

- ◆ Never use gasoline or any other substitute fuel.
- ◆ Allow the heater to cool down prior to refueling.

For additional information, visit www.oilheatamerica.com.

FIREPLACE

This popular heat source is found in homes throughout the United States, but requires proper maintenance and caution to ensure safe operation.

- ◆ Annual inspections are required by a professional chimney sweep.
- ◆ Regular cleaning will keep the fireplace free of obstructions and creosote.
- ◆ Have a removable cap installed at the top of the chimney to keep out debris and animals.
- ◆ Install a spark arrestor that has $\frac{1}{2}$ inch mesh.
- ◆ Maintain proper clearance around the fireplace and keep it clear of combustible materials such as books, newspapers and furniture.
- ◆ Always close the screen when in use.
- ◆ Keep glass doors open during the fire.
- ◆ Use a fireplace grate.
- ◆ Approved fireplace tools are recommended.
- ◆ Never burn garbage, rolled newspapers, charcoal or plastic in the fireplace.
- ◆ Avoid using gasoline or any liquid accelerant.
- ◆ Clean out ashes from previous fires and store them in a noncombustible container with a tight-fitting lid. Keep the container outside and away from the house.
- ◆ Never leave a fire unattended.
- ◆ Make sure the fire is completely out before closing the damper.



Gas fireplaces require specific maintenance:

- Adjust the milli-volt output.
- ◆ Keep the glowing embers and logs clean.
- ◆ Inspect and clean the air circulation passages and fan.
- ◆ Clean the glass as needed.
- ◆ Avoid obstructing the vents.

FREEZING PIPES - PREVENTION

1. Fit exposed pipes with insulation sleeves and/or UL listed heat tape. Two inches of insulation is optimal in regions prone to freezing weather.
2. Seal cracks and holes in outside walls and foundations near water pipes with caulking.
3. Keep cabinet doors open during cold spells to allow warm air to circulate around pipes (particularly in the kitchen and bathroom).
4. Keep slow trickles of water flowing through faucets connected to pipes that run through unheated or unprotected spaces or
5. Drain the water from sprinkler systems and exterior pool/spa supply lines, especially if your house will be unattended during cold periods.
6. Remove and drain garden hoses. If the supply line to the hose bib has a shut off valve, shut off the supply to the hose bib and drain the supply line.

ICE OR SNOW COLLECTION

Snow can be a problem for your home both as it builds-up and as it melts. Watch for snow accumulation on the downwind side of a higher-level roof, where blowing snow will collect and could lead to collapse.

To reduce snow buildup:

- ◆ Clear roof valleys and gutters of debris in the fall season before the snow starts to fall.
- ◆ Consider having the snow accumulation on your roof removed by a qualified contractor. Self-removal can be dangerous and could damage the roof covering.

To ensure proper drainage:

- ◆ Caulk all cracks and openings in the foundation around your house.
- ◆ Inspect downspouts. They should carry water at least five feet away from foundation walls.
- ◆ Ensure that the surrounding landscape is graded away from your home.
- ◆ If applicable, test sump pumps before the wet season. Install a battery backup system.
- ◆ If you do not have a sump pump in your basement, consider having a professional install a system with battery backup.
- ◆ Remove snow as it accumulates in basement stairwells and window wells.



"Winter Wonderland?" Submitted by Anthony Dembek, CT DEMHS

New England is famous worldwide for its four picturesque seasons. Our climate is unique to our area alone. As you are well aware, we have a long history of severe winter storms and blizzards. The most severe storm ever recorded happened on March 11 - 14, 1888. Snow depths were reported from 30 to 50 inches. The blizzard of 1978 dumped 24 to 38 inches and immobilized most interstate highways. The "Blizzard of the Century" in March 1993 dropped major depths of snow and ice from Alabama to Maine. The storm left 170 dead, hundreds of thousands of power outages, and was credited with causing over \$800 million in damages.

FACTS

- ◆ Fire risk is highest during a storm when people lose electricity and use portable heaters, candles, gas stoves, and other flammable heat sources.
- ◆ Most dangerous of all is the ice storm. Power lines can fall, knocking out power and posing electrocution risk.
- ◆ The leading cause of death during winter storms is from automobile and other transportation accidents. Exhaustion from overexertion is the number two killer.
- ◆ Frostbite is a severe reaction to cold exposure. A loss of feeling or pale appearance in fingers, toes, nose, or earlobes are symptoms of frostbite.
- ◆ Hypothermia is brought on when body temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapse, frequent stumbling, drowsiness, and exhaustion.
- ◆ If frostbite or hypothermia is suspected, begin warming the person slowly and seek immediate medical assistance. Do not warm extremities, arms and legs, first as this will drive the cold blood towards the heart and can lead to heart failure. Do not give the victims drugs, alcohol, caffeine, or any hot beverage or food.

What Do I Do During a Winter Storm or Blizzard?

If outdoors - Dress warmly and stretch before you go out.

- ◆ Cover your mouth.
- ◆ Avoid overexertion.
- ◆ Keep dry.
- ◆ Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

If in a car - Travel on main roads.

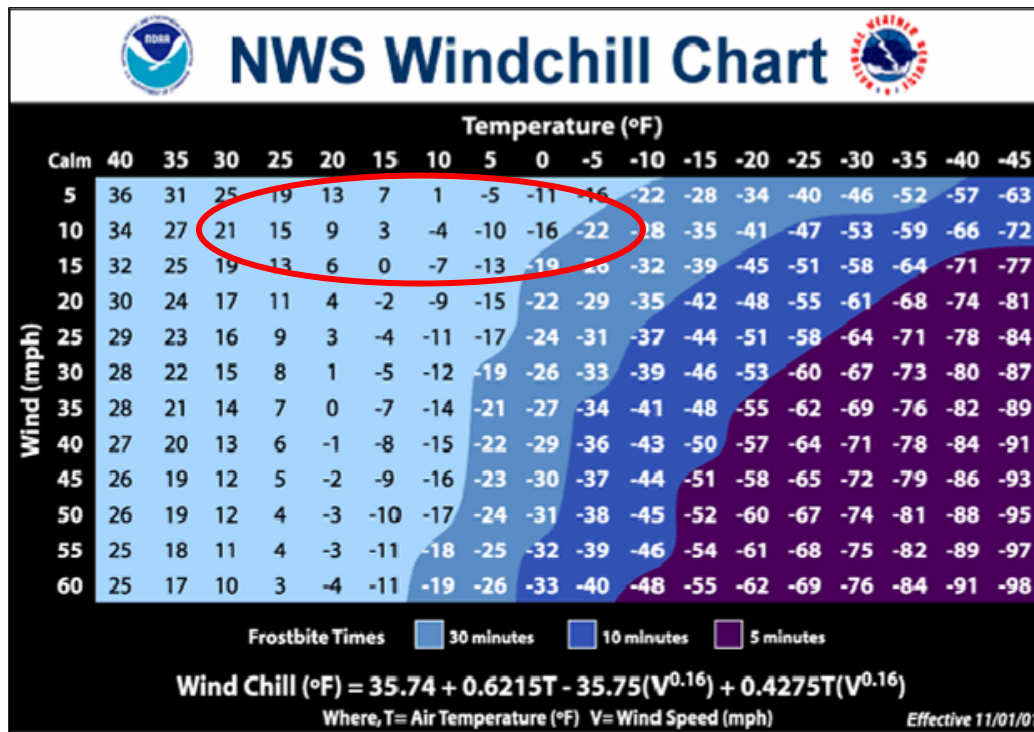
- ◆ Keep a full tank of gas.
- ◆ If you break down, display a trouble sign. Stay in the car. Occasionally run the engine to get warm. Run the engine 10 minutes every hour. Keep the tailpipe clear of ice and snow to provide ventilation and avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ◆ Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

Mitigation is the key to survival in every natural hazard situation. Preventative steps, such as car maintenance, insulating walls and attic, caulking and weather stripping, wrapping pipes, go a long way towards preventing an emergency or disaster condition. A little homework done now may go a long way later.

Facts provided by the New England States Emergency Consortium, Wakefield, MA, 1995

Cold Temperatures and Wind Chill

The month of January is expected to finish as it began, on a cold note with temperatures averaging around 4 to 5 degrees below normal. Although 4 or 5 degrees may not sound like much, this has been the coldest January in 5 years and one of the 20 coldest January's since 1895. The average temperature at Bradley International Airport for the month was just over 21 F. Along with the cold has come wind and wind chills which routinely hovered below zero several times during the month. The wind chill chart below shows our average wind chill range for January in the red circle. At times our wind chills have reached -20 F which can cause frostbite on exposed skin within 30 minutes.



With all of this cold weather we would expect thick ice on rivers and lakes in the state, however this year things are a little different. In 2008 Connecticut received over 60 inches of rain which is well above our normal of around 40 inches. A lot of that rainfall was absorbed into the ground and is still flowing out of the ground and into our rivers. This ground water is well above freezing when it leaches out of the soil and flows into the brooks, streams and rivers. This relatively warm water has kept ice from forming on many rivers despite the cold temperatures. Persons should be very careful when skating or walking on ice especially on rivers or lakes that are feed by rivers. The ice may be thinner than expected.

So what's in store for February? The long range forecast is predicting that temperatures in February will not be as cold and will be about average. This may feel like a reprieve since average temperatures also begin to rise in February and we can expect temperatures some 6 to 8 degrees warmer if the forecast is correct. That's a big if because the long range forecast can be very inaccurate. January was forecast to be slightly warmer than normal and we have seen what really happened. So keep those gloves and hats handy, we are going to be needing them for a while.

Upcoming Training & Exercise

Feb 3 & 4	Bioterrorism: Mass Prophylaxis Prep & Planning Local Jurisdiction-Brainard
Feb 11	Preparing Communities for Agroterrorism—Southbury
Feb 25	HSIN Workshop— Meriden (Contact Lee.Toffey@ct.gov— For current HSIN users only)
Feb 26	Crisis Leadership & Decision-Making for Elected Officials—Brainard
Mar 3 thru 5	Emergency Response to Domestic Biological Incidents—Southbury
Mar 24-26	Campus CERT TtT— WCSU, Danbury
Mar 23-26	Introduction to CAMEO—Guilford

For training & exercise questions contact the Training Unit at 860-256-0840.
Fax: 860-706-5539 or email: Training.demhs@ct.gov

You may register for these courses as listed at: www.ct.gov/demhs; or through POSTC at www.ct.gov/post; or through the CT Fire Academy (CFA) at www.ct.gov/cfa.



Please go to the following link to access the Citizen Corps Bulletin. Once there, you will find helpful information and back issues of the bulletin. An example of what is available is the following excerpt from the January 2009 bulletin:

<http://www.citizencorps.gov/news/enews/>

Operation Hope Offers Mortgage Crisis Hotline

In an effort to save homeownership during a time of crisis for many mortgage holders, Operation HOPE, Inc. is providing a number of services through its Mortgage HOPE Crisis Hotline (MHCH). Through the Hotline, foreclosures are delayed and loan modifications are negotiated weekly. As of November 2008, the MHCH has prevented 257 foreclosures through loan modification or no action agreements and assisted an additional 145 clients, working through more than \$100 million in challenged mortgages. Collaborative efforts by all segments of the financial services industry, government agencies and community organizations have provided solutions to the growing problem before it cripples the economy.

The Hotline receives calls on a regular basis and each client is assigned to a dedicated HOPE mortgage counselor, and in some cases a Virtual HOPE Corps volunteer, who works with the client until the loan is modified or another outcome has been reached, sometimes without lender cooperation. Homeowners with mortgage challenges can call 888-388-HOPE (4673) for free services including assistance with negotiating with lenders, applying for loan modifications, avoiding foreclosure, selling a house and purchasing an affordable home, and restructuring existing debt and obligations. To learn more, visit www.operationhope.org/smdev/hotline.php?id=1427.



3RD ANNUAL INTELLIGENCE LIAISON OFFICERS CONFERENCE

**SOUTHERN CT STATE UNIVERSITY
JANUARY 15, 2009**

The 2009 Connecticut Intelligence Center (CTIC) Intelligence Liaison Officer (ILO) Conference was held on January 15th at Southern CT State University. This is the third annual conference sponsored by the CTIC and included the following speakers:

- ♦ Mr. Leonard Boyle, Director of the Terrorism Screening Center
- ♦ Mr. Nicholas Cotto – Gang/Apprehension Officer, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Youth Services
- ♦ Mr. Chris Magyarics, Anti-Defamation League
- ♦ Mr. Richard McCaffrey, DHS ICE, Detention & Removal Office

The working lunch included a CTIC overview with information on products, suspicious activity reporting and participating agencies and their resources. The speakers were followed by breakout sessions for each Region which enables attendees the opportunity to network with their regional peers and their representatives at the CTIC.



Former Commissioner of the Dept. of Public Safety, Leonard J. Boyle, was one of the speakers at this years conference. Mr. Boyle is the Director at the Terrorism Screening Center in Washington, DC.





Want Continued Port Access? You Need a TWIC!

(Transportation Worker Identification Credential)

- **What is TWIC?**

TWIC is a common identification credential for all personnel requiring unescorted access to secure areas of MTSA-regulated facilities and vessels, and all mariners holding Coast Guard-issued credentials. TSA will issue workers a tamper-resistant "Smart Card" containing the worker's biometric (fingerprint template) to allow for a positive link between the card itself and the individual.

- **Who needs a TWIC?**

Merchant mariners and individuals who need unescorted access to secure areas of ports, facilities, or vessels regulated by the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) will need to obtain a TWIC.

- **How much will the TWIC cost?**

The TWIC will cost \$132.50 and is payable by Credit Card, Money Order or Certified Check. HME, FAST, MMD, Certificate of Registry, or MML holders may pay a reduced fee of \$105.25.

- **When will I be able to enroll?**

Enrollment dates and locations will be available soon. To save time, you can PRE-ENROLL online at www.tsa.gov/twic and make an appointment to ensure limited wait time. When enrollment begins in your area, you must visit an enrollment center to complete enrollment and make payment.

- **What documentation will be required for TWIC?**

Applicants must provide the appropriate documents in order to verify their identity. They must provide one document from list A or two from list B:

List A (Any 1 of list below)

- Unexpired U.S. Passport
- Unexpired Permanent Resident Card or Unexpired Alien Registration Receipt Card with photograph
- Unexpired Foreign Passport with one of the following:
 - ❖ I-551 Stamp;
 - ❖ Attached INS Form I-94 indicating unexpired employment authorization;
 - ❖ Unexpired Employment Authorization Document (I-766);*OR* with one of the following Unexpired Visas: E-1, E-2, E-3, H-1B, H-1B1, L-1, O-1, TN, M-1, C-1/D
- FAST (Free and Secure Trade) Card
- Merchant Mariner Document (MMD)

List B (Need two and one must be a government-issued photo ID)

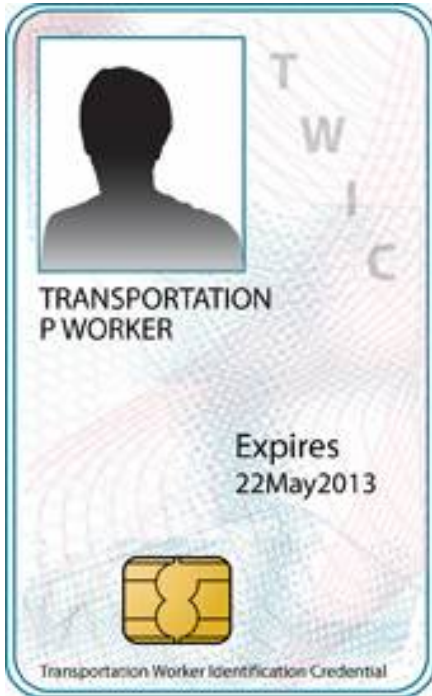
- U.S. Certificate of Citizenship (N-560, 561)
- U.S. Certificate of Naturalization (N-550 or 570)
- Driver's license or ID card issued by a State or outlying possession of the United States
- Original or certified copy of birth certificate issued by a State, county, municipal authority, or outlying possession of the United States bearing an official seal
- Voter's Registration Card
- U.S. Consular Report of Birth Abroad
- U.S. Military ID or U.S. Retired Military ID
- Military Dependent's Card
- Expired U.S. Passport
- Native American Tribal Document
- U.S. Social Security Card
- U.S. Citizen Card I-197
- U.S. Military Discharge Papers DD-214
- Department of Transportation (DOT) Medical Card
- Civil Marriage Certificate
- MML (Merchant Mariner License) bearing an official raised seal, or a certified copy



Transportation
Security
Administration



SAMPLE TRANSPORTATION WORKER'S IDENTIFICATION CREDENTIAL



TWIC enrollment center locations in CT:

<http://twicinformation.tsa.dhs.gov/twicinfo/CenterSearchAction.do>

75 Crystal Av., New London CT

175 N. Main St., Branford CT

Suite 2A 300 Long Beach Blvd. Stratford CT

1

PRE-ENROLL
AND SCHEDULE
APPOINTMENT



2

GATHER
DOCUMENTS



3

ENROLL



4

PICK UP TWIC



http://www.tsa.gov/what_we_do/layers/twic/index.shtm Link to TSA TWIC web site.